



BUNCH GRAPES IN THE HOME GARDEN

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Introduction: Grapes are welcome summer treats that can be eaten fresh, processed into jellies, jams, juice or even fermented into wine. Grapes are adapted to many soil types, and can be quite long-lived. There are basically two kinds of grapes grown in North Carolina, bunch grapes and muscadine. Bunch grapes produce berries in large clusters, and grow best in the mountains and piedmont areas. In coastal plain areas, Pierce's disease kills or shortens the life expectancy of many popular bunch grapes. Muscadine grapes, exemplified by the Scupper-nong variety and noted for having smaller clusters, are not affected by this disease. In these areas the kinds of grapes that may be expected to give the best results are muscadine (see Muscadine Grapes in the Home Garden - Hort. Leaflet No. 8203).

Your success with bunch grapes will depend upon the attention you give to all phases of production — including variety selection, soil management, fertilization, training, pruning, and pest control. This leaflet presents detailed suggestions for the establishment and care of bunch grapes.

Variety Selection: The choice of variety depends on a number of factors including its adaptation to your area and the type(s) of grape you prefer. There are seedless table varieties, native Fox-type table grapes such as Concord, muscats and many wine varieties. Newer hybrid bunch varieties resulting from crosses of European vinifera (the old-world grape)

with native American varieties are known as French-American hybrids. Both vinifera and French-American hybrids are used primarily for winemaking purposes. However, vinifera type grapes are more difficult to grow and require regular chemical sprays throughout the growing season to control diseases. Vinifera are easily injured by fluctuating winter temperatures and typically sustain greater losses to spring frost events than French-American hybrids. Vinifera should be grown on a rootstock (Couderc 3306, 3309, or SO4).

The bunch grapes listed in Table 1 are the most suitable for growing in piedmont and western North Carolina. Six grapevines should furnish enough fruit for most families. A mature vine can yield 10 pounds or more of fresh fruit. Early season table grapes will begin ripening in mid-summer, while a number of the wine varieties do not begin to ripen until late summer. All bunch grapes are self-fertile and may be planted alone or with other varieties.

Soil And Site: Good air circulation, sun exposure and a soil that is well drained are desirable for quality crops of grapes. Air circulation is best if the location has a gentle slope; avoid low frosty pockets. Plant the vines away from trees so that they will receive full sunshine. Grapes are not as particular to soils as other fruit crops; as long as the soil is best; rich soils stimulate excessive vine growth at the expense of fruit quality. Grapes require a soil pH of 5.5 to 7.0.

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